

Deaf Culture Question of the Week – November 1 - 5, 2010
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CODA, in Deaf culture, is an acronym for Child of Deaf Adult in other words a hearing child who is born and raised in a household where there are one or more deaf caregivers.

From the choices below which of these famous people are actually CODAs? [Note: there is more than one correct answer.]

- a. Alexander Graham Bell
- b. Edwin Miner Gallaudet
- c. Gil Grissom of CSI TV program fame
- d. Lou Fant

Go to the bottom for the answer.

Answers: “a” “b” and “d” –

a. Alexander Graham Bell’s mother was severely hard of hearing and his wife, Mabel, was deaf. Alexander Graham Bell although opposed to the use of sign language actually learned fingerspelling as a child to “translate parlor conversations” for his mother. His wife, Mabel, had learned sign language as a child but because she became deaf at age 5 from scarlet fever also retained her ability to speak. Both Alexander and Mabel were opposed to the use of sign language in the education of Deaf children. Read more about A.G. Bell here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Graham_Bell

b. Edwin Miner Gallaudet, founder of Gallaudet University, was the son of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet and Sophia Fowler. Sophia was deaf, educated at the American School for the Deaf and later became a teacher at this school. Edwin was raised in a bilingual, ASL-English signing environment. Read more about Edwin Miner Gallaudet here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Miner_Gallaudet

d. Lou Fant, was born in Greenville, SC to two Deaf parents. As a hearing child his first language was American Sign Language. He is notable for being a founding member of the National Theatre of the Deaf, an author of sign language text books, a skilled interpreter and a teacher. Read more about Louie Fant here: <http://www.deafroadrunner.com/memorials/fant/index.htm>

c. Gil Grissom, the lead crime scene investigator of CSI TV fame, is not an actual CODA but this fictional character supposedly had a Deaf mother and used sign language in several episodes of this TV series. The character was portrayed as a CODA. Read more about this fictional character here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gil_Grissom

Learn more about CODAs and the CODA organization here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child_Of_Deaf_Adult